

EMILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND  
REFORMER 235

s'amuse," had so out-Zola'd anything written by Zola himself that its author had been prosecuted for it. M. Eosny on his side had -at that date written two books, " Nell Horn," a ridiculous story of " English manners," and "Le Bilateral," a study of Anarchism and Collectivism which showed marked improvement. M. Gustave Quiches was the author of three volumes, none of which had attracted attention; while Lucien Descaves had published four novels, and was gradually emerging from obscurity, though another two years were to elapse before his venturesome book, " Sous-Off," — for which he was tried and acquitted — made his name at all widely known. Finally, M. Paul Margueritte — destined like M. Eosny to acquire a high position in literature, in conjunction, be it said, with his younger brother, Yictor — was as yet only known by an estimable book on his father, the gallant general killed at Sedan, and a couple of works of fiction, " Tous Quatre" and " Une Confession posthume." The eldest of the band, Bonnetain, was in his thirtieth year, the others were six or seven and twenty,

A comical feature of the affair was that of these five indignant writers, who so solemnly disowned " the Master of Me"dan/" only one, Bonnetain, was personally

known to him.  
They had met just twice. With the others Zola  
had no  
acquaintance at all. This appears clearly from  
the state-  
ments he made to M. Fernand Xau of the " Gil  
Bias," who,  
directly the manifesto appeared and Zola's  
enemies raised a  
cry of jubilation at the so-called " great  
Naturalist schism,"  
hurried to Medan to interview the author of  
"La Terre."  
A portion of Zola's declarations to M. Xau  
may well be  
given here: